

2008-2010 Montana Places: Expanding the Cultural and Historical Record of Montana

The Montana State Historic Preservation Office, a division of the Montana Historical Society, was the successful recipient of a \$149,979 federal research and documentation grant awarded by Preserve America.

Proper records are the foundation for determining historic preservation needs and documenting existing historic resources. However, funding for survey and inventory projects has not been available since the early 1990s, and many communities lack the resources to conduct their own surveys. The Montana State Historic Preservation Office was able to subgrant the majority of the funds awarded back to communities, and to specific projects, to support historic research and documentation efforts.

Three separate projects were funded under this award: 1) a Montana Tribal Heritage Summit; 2) the survey and inventory of 50 post-war buildings in Montana; and 3) sub-grants to six Preserve America communities to support local research efforts and nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.

1) Montana Tribal Heritage Summit

The Montana Tribal Nations Preservation Heritage Resource Preservation Summit was held March 25-27, 2009 in Helena, with the goal of providing a forum with Montana's Native American Tribes to determine cultural resources identification and documentation needs from a Native American perspective. The Tribal Summit was attended by 41 registered roundtable participants, along with numerous others who attended as information providers and listeners. All but two of the Montana Tribes attended the Summit.

As a result of this Summit, summary notes and recommendations were made to the Governor's Indian Nation Council and agencies. Several Section 106 consultation issues have since been readdressed, and field trips and inspections have been held, including a guided tour of the FWS Eagle Feather repository in Colorado. The State Historic Preservation Office has also contracted a Tribal Historic Preservation Office Archaeological Training session to be held in Spring 2010. Benefits have been numerous, diverse, and ongoing at many levels - from project specific issues to broad policy and legislative assessments.

2) Montana Post-World War II (1945 – 1960) Architectural Survey and Inventory

\$43,000 in funds were designated to survey and create a historical context for post-World War II buildings dating from 1945-1960. Historical contextual research, and the individual recording of 50 buildings across the state, comprise the project, designed to identify major patterns in architectural construction during the period. State, county, city, and privately-owned buildings represent the majority of the buildings recorded. The project consists of the evaluation within the context of national movements, including an overview of statewide building trends, identification of major architects, architectural styles and

materials, and general characterization of property types and references compiled during the research. This project is scheduled for completion by June 30, 2010.

- 3) **The Montana State Historic Preservation Office sub-granted \$97,500 in funds to the following six Preserve America communities in Montana to survey and document buildings in their communities. From those efforts, nine historic districts in five Preserve America Communities will be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. As a result of the listings, commercial building owners will have an opportunity to apply for historic rehabilitation tax credits. These projects are scheduled for completion by May 31, 2010.**
 - a) **Billings - Funds are being used to survey and inventory 44 commercial buildings in the original town site of Billings with the goal of listing the Billings Old Town Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places. \$11,750**
 - b) **Butte – Butte received funding to update 1983 information on 100 neighborhood properties in the Butte-Anaconda National Historic Landmark. The effort will assist the community’s planning efforts and preservation goals. \$25,000**
 - c) **Great Falls – Great Falls is surveying 51 properties in the West Bank Urban Renewal District, an area currently undergoing a transition from heavy industrial to commercial, retail and recreational uses. The survey resulted in a Great Falls West Bank Historic District containing five buildings. \$10,000**
 - d) **Kalispell – Kalispell is surveying 67 properties located in, and adjacent to, their Main Street Commercial Historic District. These properties will be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. \$12,500**
 - e) **Laurel - Laurel’s project includes survey and inventory of 70 buildings in downtown Laurel for the purpose of establishing a six-block historic district. These properties will be listed as part of a Laurel Downtown Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places. \$14,818**
 - f) **Missoula - Missoula received funds to survey 40 properties and expand the Downtown Missoula Historic District; research, survey and nominate 36 buildings at the Missoula County Fairgrounds; and document and add 12 campus buildings and landscape features to the University of Montana Historic District. Missoula also received funds to evaluate the significance of Fort Missoula as a National Historic Landmark. \$23,432**